

Insights into Social Networking Dynamics of Students – An Explorative Study

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ABSTRACT

Digital technology has brewed revolution in the world as never before. Social networking websites like Face book, Google+, Twitter and You tube have become very dear and popular and became part of daily life of many. Education field has owned the technology for application and solving many problems confronted by it. The technology may replace the teacher in the educational setting in near future due to autonomous learning of the students. In this paper, the investigators tried to understand the social networking dynamics of students of higher education. In the light of the responses of the study, the researcher concluded that social networking websites have both positive as well as negative impact on the education of students and around 66% of the students of 225sample, are possessing own computers, which reflects the urban scenario and as against this only 44% of the students have internet facility.77% of the students are using social network services for educational purpose, which is positive development. The experiences of the respondents on social networking have proved to be of great influence on their day-to-day transactions. Face book and the Google are the two sites mostly visited by majority of the students. Rural and semi urban students are lagging behind to benefit from the social Network services as they are not accessible to the networks easily.

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Introduction

Introduction of technology has changed the face of countries and brought development in two ways: Firstly enhancing human capabilities secondly, as a means for human development due to economic progress and increased productivity. The policy decisions made in different sectors like science, technology, economics and business development are based on the information generated electronically. Information has become an asset not only to the policy makers but also to the people at large. Therefore, access to information is a key factor in the generation of wealth and there is a strong link between the level of development of a country and its level of technology. Educators and policy makers believe

that information and communication technologies are of supreme importance to the future of education and, in turn, for the country at large. Today, technology provides a lot of opportunities for education that can be accessed by everyone across the globe. Educators are looking for their potential for use in education with the growth of social networking websites, with the consciousness that social networking sites may have the ability to endorse both collaboration and active learning. Social networking sites not only assist students but also offer great opportunities for communication among administrators and teachers. Social media portals like Face book, Google+, Close runners up include LinkedIn, Ibibo, YouTube, Bharatstudent.com and Twitter is very popular among the present day youth. It is quite accurate to assume that teens drive the social media, especially those

coming from the mid-strata of society, be it to connect to their relatives, keep in touch with friends, share multimedia, read products reviews and op-eds, or even find information and look for a job. Ms Wright observed "students often spend a large amount of their free time using social media, so if this tool could be used effectively for academic purposes it would be a great resource". Further her research demonstrated that some individuals were more targeted in their use of online tools, while their peers used social networking to share course information with fellow students without any qualms. Similarly Dr Stephanie Morgan, Chartered psychologist commented: "My own research on use of the social media in education supports some of these findings, but it also indicates that students do need to receive guidance about the appropriate and effective use of social media. They believe they are skilled in social use and, as the study shows, some are not able to develop those skills in an educational setting". Further he stated "Whilst I totally agree that it is important to understand student motivation to use these tools, it is also vital to explain to them the advantages of developing knowledge and social capital and the broader context within which they will be able to utilise these skills in future employment."

The use of these social media in India has seen a sudden and unprecedented growth off late, and is rapidly expanding for both, personal, business and educational purposes. It is estimated at about sixty percent of the online Indian audience use social media actively. In these circumstances there is a need to understand the Social networking dynamics of students.

Social Networking Service/site (SNS):

is an online service, platform, or site that focuses on facilitating the building of social networks or social relations among people who, for example, share interests, activities, backgrounds, or real-life connections. A social network service consists of a representation of each user (often a profile), his/her social links, and a variety of additional services. Most social network services are web-based and provide means for users to interact over the Internet, such as e - mail and instant messaging. Online community services are sometimes considered as a social network service, though in a broader sense, social network service usually means an individual-centered service whereas online

community services are group-centered. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, activities, events, and interests within their individual networks. The main types of social networking services are Face book, Google+, Tumblr and Twitter widely used worldwide, Nexopia in Canada, Badoo, Bebo, VKontakte, Draugiem.lv (mostly in Latvia), Hi5, Hyves (mostly in The Netherlands), iWiW (mostly in Hungary), Nasza-Klasa (mostly in Poland), Skyrock, The Sphere, StudiVZ (mostly in Germany), Tagged, Tuenti (mostly in Spain), and XING in parts of Europe, Hi5 and Orkut in South America and Central America, LAGbook, Mxit in Africa, and Cyworld, Mixi, Orkut, renren, weibo and Wretch in Asia and the Pacific Islands. According to the latest survey (June 2012), the most visited website in the India by 57.8 million is Google and Face book is the 2nd most visited website.

Significance of the Study:

Social Networking Service (SNS) programs are considered to be the latest and most effective innovation in the field of education. SNS are accessible anywhere, in any place and at any time by using internet. Possessing computers is not fashion but passion and it indicates the seriousness of students towards their future. Using the Social network services would empower the students and drive them vertically and horizontally in the context of globalization. The present study is under taken with an intension to assess the students' social networking dynamics and making suggestions for improving their skills for their betterment.

Statement of the problem: "Insights into Social Networking Dynamics of Students – An Explorative Study"

Objectives of the Study:

- To study the percentage of students' possessing Computers and Internet facility and their frequency of access to net services and the membership in SNS(Social networking Services)
- To assess the utility of Social Networking Services and associated educational Blogs / Sites
- To examine the influence of Social Networking Services among Students

Methodology:

The investigator adopted the Descriptive Survey method. The purposive sampling technique was employed and the data was collected from 225 Students from two higher educational institutions of Warangal city (Lal Bahadur P.G. College and Vagdevi P.G. College) in which 67 B.Com, 26 BBM, 13 BCA, 41 M.Sc, 78 MBA, Students were taken as the respondents of the study. The data was collected using close end questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 14 items related to possessing of own computers, internet facility, accessible to internet, purpose of using SNS, membership in SNS and blogs, purpose of using Social Network Services, opinions of students on the impact of SNS in classroom situation and in their life etc. The tool has possessed content and face validity.

Analysis and Interpretation of the Data:

The data was analyzed and interpreted keeping in view the objectives.

1. Possessing own Computers

To study the objective, the data collected from various groups is arranged along with the students possessing own computers and their percentage along with the data of students not possessing computers. This would help to estimate the percentage of students possessing computers and using the technology for their educational development.

From table: 1, it could be observed that 155 of the 225 students have computers and it is accounted for 66.67%. The table also revealed that 33.33% of the students have no computers. Of the five groups of students, 92.30% BCA students have computers; whereas only 53.33% of M.Sc students have computers. Followed by it, 80.76% of the BBM students have computers. Only 59.7% of the BCA students have computers. On the whole 66.67% has own computers. The responses indicated that the urban scenario and it may be different in rural areas where survival itself is questionable and equipping of personal computer is a dream. The

surprising fact is only 53% of M.Sc., computer students are possessing computers.

Table: 1 showing No. Of students with percentage having computer

Group	No. of students possessing own computers with percentage	No. of students not possessing own computers	Total No. Of students
B.Com	40 (59.7%)	27 (41.3%)	67
M. Sc	22 (53.65%)	19 (46.35%)	41
MBA	60 (76.92%)	18 (23.08%)	78
BBM	21 (80.76%)	5 (19.24%)	26
BCA	12 (92.30%)	1 (7.70%)	13
Total	155 (66.67%)	70 (33.33%)	225

2. Students and Internet connection

The data collected from the students, related to the internet facility is presented in table: 2

Table: 2 showing No. Of students with percentage having internet connection

Group	Yes	No	Total
B.Com	23 (34.32%)	44 (65.68%)	67
M. Sc (Computers)	14 (34.14%)	27 (65.86%)	41
MBA	35 (44.87%)	43 (55.13%)	78
BBM	18 (69.23%)	8 (30.77%)	26
BCA	9 (69.23%)	4 (30.775)	13
Total	99 (44%)	126 (66%)	225

From table: 2 it is visible that only 44% of the students have internet facility to their computers and collection of information would be highly difficulty. 69% of BBM and similar percentage BCA students have net facility and with respect to the remaining groups the percentage of students connected with net ranges from 34 to 44 %. Now- a -days B.Com computers is introduced at graduation level and they need to carry laptops and in this case it is not reflected. Further the data revealed that only 34% of the M.Sc computer students have net facility.

3. Frequency of accessing internet.

Table: 3 showing the frequency of accessing internet by the students

Group	Several Times a day	Once a day	Several Times a week	Access	Don't access	Total
B.Com	8 (12%)	19 (28%)	27 (40%)	54 (81%)	13 (19%)	67
M.Sc	4 (10%)	5 (12%)	22 (54%)	31 (76%)	10 (24%)	41
MBA	12 (15%)	18 (23%)	40 (51%)	70 (90%)	8 (10%)	78
BBm	7 (27%)	4 (15%)	13 (50%)	24 (92%)	2 (8%)	26
BCA	1 (8%)	4 (31%)	4 (31%)	9 (69%)	4 (31%)	13
Total	32(14%)	50 (22%)	106 (47%)	188 (84%)	37 (16%)	225

The table: 3 revealed that 14% of the students use the internet several times in a day, 22% once in a day and 47% several times in a week and on the whole 84% of the students are accessing net and 16% don't access the net at all. Although the number of students accessing the net, for what they access the net is a question to be answered.

status apparently good, still there needs to be a question for which they brows the sites.

4. Membership status of students in the SNS:

From table:4, it could be understood that 77% of the students are the members of the SNS sites of which 88% of the BBM students have membership in SNS sites, followed by it MBA students. Though the membership

Table: 4 showing the membership of students in SNS

Group	No. of Students having membership	No. of Students not having membership	Total
B.com	52 (78%)	15 (22%)	67
M.Sc	29 (70)	12 (30%)	41
MBA	62 (80%)	16 (20%)	78
BBM	23 (88%)	3 (12%)	26
BCA	8 (62%)	5 (38%)	13
Total	174 (77%)	51 (33%)	225

5. Period of using SNS sites by the students

Table: 5 showing the period of using the SNS

Group	No of students using SNS between 1-6 month	No of students using SNS between 6-1 yr	No of students using SNS between 1-2 yrs	No of students using SNS 2 yrs and above	Total
B.com	19 (38%)	9 (18%)	10 (20%)	12 (24%)	50
M.Sc	13 (39%)	5 (15%)	9 (27%)	6 (18%)	33
MBA	19 (30%)	10 (16%)	14 (22%)	20 (32%)	63
BBM	6 (27%)	4 (18%)	7 (32%)	5 (23%)	22
BCA	1 (17%)	2 (33%)	2 (33%)	1 (17%)	6
Total	58(33%)	30(17%)	42(24%)	44(25%)	174

The table: 5 revealed that 33% of the students are using the sites for the last 6 months, 30% for one year, 24%are using for the two years, 25% for the last 2years and above. Majority of the students had arranged net facility very recently.

6. Kind of SNS being accessed often

Table: 6 showing the SNS accessed by the students and their percentage

Group	Face book	Orkut	Google	Twitter	Total
B.com	32 (64%)	3(6%)	14 (28%)	1(4%)	50
M.Sc	12 (36%)	2(6%)	19 (58%)	0	33
MBA	45 (71%)	1(2%)	17 (27%)	0	63
BBM	19 (86%)	1(5%)	2 (9%)	0	22
BCA	4 (67%)	0	2 (4%)	0	6
Total	112 (64%)	7 (4%)	54 (31%)	1 (1%)	174

It could be observed from the table: 6 that 64% of the students have access to facebook, 31% to Google, which shows that the students are using mostly face book to chat with their friends or sending messages to them and second place occupies Google which may be accessed for the purpose of information.

7. Purpose of using SNS

Table: 7 showing the number of students for the purpose of learning

Group	Yes	No	Total
B.com	34 (68%)	16 (32%)	50
M.Sc	25 (76%)	8 (24%)	33
MBA	55 (87%)	8 (13%)	63
BBM	16 (72%)	6 (27%)	22
BCA	4 (67%)	2(33%)	6
Total	134(77%)	40(25%)	174

It could be observed from table:7 that77 % of the students who are having internet are using social network for the purpose of learning related to their education and 25% do not use for any kind of learning and they may be using for entertainment purpose.

8. Membership of students in Blogs:

Table: 8 showing the membership of students

Group	Yes	No	Total
B.com	8 (16%)	42 (84%)	50
M.Sc	3 (9%)	30 (91%)	33
MBA	19 (30%)	44 (70%)	63
BBM	11 (50%)	11 (50%)	22
BCA	3 (50%)	3 (50%)	6
Total	44 (25%)	130 (75%)	174

The table: 8 disclosed that 25% of the students are the members of the blogs and rest of the students are not the members of any blog and the teachers should guide them about the sites which are useful for strengthening their academic skills.

9. Usefulness of SNS for learning of subjects matter

Table: 9 showing the number of students with percentage accessed for subject matter purpose

Group	Yes	No	Total
B.com	29 (58%)	21 (42%)	50
M.Sc	27 (82%)	6 (18%)	33
MBA	48 (76%)	15 (24%)	63
BBm	15 (68%)	7 (32%)	22
BCA	4 (67%)	2 (33%)	6
Total	123 (71%)	51 (29%)	174

It is visible from table: 9 that71% of the students expressed that the sites are helpful for learning the subject contents and 21% of the students are not using for subject learning.

10. Students motivation towards subject by using SNS:

Table: 10 showing the number of students with percentage being motivated

Group	Yes	No	Total
B.Com	21 (42%)	29 (58%)	50
M.Sc	23 (70%)	10 (30%)	33
MBA	43 (68%)	20 (32%)	63
BBM	7 (32%)	15 (68%)	22
BCA	3 (50%)	3 (50%)	6
Total	97 (56%)	77 (44%)	174

From table: 10, it could be traced that, 56% of the students felt that the SNS motivated them to work hard to learn their subject matter and 44% did not use it for subject learning.70% of the M.Sc., students expressed that they used SNS for learning subject matter.

11. Influence of SNS during the interaction in the classroom:

Table: 11 showing the no of students with percentage being influenced by SNS for classroom interaction

Group	Yes	No	Total
B.com	25 (50%)	25 (50%)	50
M.Sc	21 (64%)	12 (36%)	33
MBA	38(60%)	25 (40%)	63
BBM	12 (55%)	10 (45%)	22
BCA	4 (67%)	2 (33%)	6
Total	100 (57%)	74 (43%)	174

The table:11 discloses that 57% expressed that the SNS helped them for interaction in the classroom more freely as against 43% who did not say that the SNS are not allowing them to interact in the class room.

12. Opinion of students on the influence of SNS on their life:

Table: 12 showing the influence of SNS in their life

Group	Yes	No	Total
B.Com	40 (80%)	10 (20%)	50
M.Sc	30 (91%)	3 (9%)	33
MBA	59 (94%)	4 (6%)	63
BBM	18 (82%)	4 (18%)	22
BCA	4 (67%)	2 (13%)	6
Total	151 (87%)	24 (13%)	174

Table:12 reveals that,87% students said that the SNS has tremendous influence in their life by way of getting new information, learning new issues, adding subject matter to their existing level, finding solutions to their educational problems, recruitment notifications, admissions, tracing good institutions for their studies

13. Category of students being influenced by SNS most:

Table: 13 showing the category of students being influenced by SNS

Group	Urban	Semi Urban	Rural	All of these	Total
B.com	10 (20%)	0	7 (14%)	33 (66%)	50
M.Sc	6 (18%)	1 (3%)	2 (6%)	25 (73%)	34
MBA	21 (34%)	7 (11%)	3 (5%)	31 (50%)	62
BBM	7 (31%)	0	1 (5%)	14 (64%)	22
BCA	0	0	1	5	6
Total	44 (25%)	8 (5%)	14(8%)	108 (62%)	174

Table: 13 showed that, urban students were highly influenced (25%) by the SNS over their counterparts and on the whole 62% of the students are influenced by the SNS. Only 13% of the semi urban and rural students were influenced by the SNS. In other words the rural students are not aware of the benefits of SNS and there is a need to guide the rural students on this issue.

14. Positive and Negative influences of SNS

Table: 14 showing the number of students on whom the SNS was influenced by SNS

Group	Positive	Negative	No influence	Total
B.com	35 (70%)	6 (12%)	9 (18%)	50
M.Sc	19 (56%)	5 (15%)	10 (29%)	34
MBA	39 (63%)	10 (16%)	13 (21%)	62
BBM	8 (36%)	7 (32%)	7 (32%)	22
BCA	2 (33%)	2 (33%)	2 (34%)	6
Total	103 (59%)	30 (17%)	41 (24%)	174

It could be seen from the table: 14 that 59% of the students responded that the SNS influenced positively. In other words thee students are benefitted by way of collecting new information, chatting with their friends for solutions to their problems, research purpose and rest of the students were influenced by the sites meant for privacy, just time passing chats, playing computer games, addiction to computer for no reason. About 24% of the students said that there is no influence of the SNS on their life. This group needs to be addressed for motivation and deriving the SNS benefits.

Major Findings of the Study:

The following are the findings of the study.

1. 67 per cent of the respondents have own Computers and 43 per cent of 225 samples have internet facility.

2. 77% of the students have the membership in SNS.
 3. 33% of the students are using internet since 6 months and 25% since two years.
 4. Majority 64 per cent of them are access to face book, 31 per cent of them use Google, 4 per cent of them use Orkut and no respondent use the twitter as part of their browsing.
 5. 77 per cent of the respondents use SNS for getting education and 75 per cent of them are not the members of any educational Blogs.
 6. 56 per cent expressed that they are motivated to work very hard for their professional growth of subject matter.
 7. 57 per cent of the respondents felt that the SNS has made them to express their views and opinions freely in the Class and 87% of the students felt that the SNS would be useful in their life.
 8. 62 per cent of the respondents opined that the SNS has influenced the Urban, Semi – Urban and Rural areas Women Students, in which 25 per cent of the Students are from urban area, 5 per cent from Semi-Urban area and only 8 per cent from rural area have been influenced by the SNS.
 9. 76 per cent of the respondents revealed that the SNS has influence on life in which, 59 per cent of them have Positive influence, 17 per cent of them have Negative influence and rest felt that there was no influence of SNS in their life.
- applications, problem solving, awareness about standard colleges for admission, using online services for livelihood etc. Alerting students from falling prey to the privacy sites which would spoil their life is warranted. The rural students do not have much access to network services due to their non accessibility to the network services and Govt may take steps to provide laptops to the poor students of technical courses, which was done in the case of students of Triple IT students of Andhra Pradesh. Even the Govt of Uttar Pradesh has gifted the laptops to the students.

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Educational Implications of the Study:

Majority of the urban respondents are accessible to the SNS and it is a positive development in the field of Education. It indicated that, the SNS has broadened the views of students and it is useful in their studies for empowering them in their life. However, the utility of the Social networking services have to be explained by the professionals and need guidance in this matter. The results of SNS would be very high provided the knowledge and skills are used for collecting information for their personal growth, seeking employment, research

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